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November/December 2020

COOLtears™

and tiny campers
MAGAZINE

A ROLLING BOX OF MEMORIES



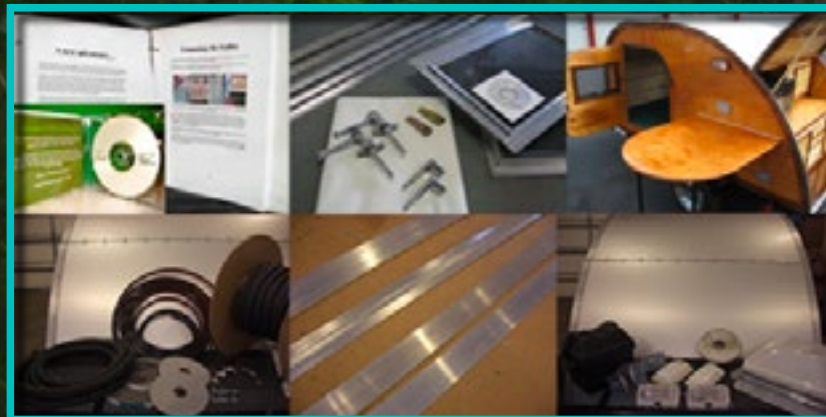
Winterizing Basics
PLUS: 2020 Gift Giving Guide
Photo Contest Winners Announced

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Letter from the Editor:



Tiny Camper Enthusiasts,

2020 has not been the year that any of us could have imagined. Some may have lost loved ones, lost their jobs, diagnosed with serious illnesses, or continue to live with other invisible burdens.

This holiday season will not be easy for anyone and it may be drastically different than what we've experienced before. My family has experienced a lot of change this year - all pre - Covid. I lost my dad in a car accident in January, a dear friend passed away in March, and my father-in-law moved into a nursing home, struggling with dementia. Soon after these major life impacts, Covid - 19 invaded the United States and the rest of the world. I am fortunate to still have my day job that pays the bills, although many of my coworkers/friends were let go. While I have always dreamed of working remotely, I never imagined it would be because of a global pandemic.

Our home has always been the warm, inviting gathering place for friends and family. Each year it seems that we gain a few new friends as someone else joins us for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner. So while we are still struggling with what has become the new normal, we are also faced with adjusting our holiday plans at a time when we want to see our families the most. We've chosen to not have the large gatherings as in years past and have opted to quarantine and visit my in-laws before the holiday and then have our adult boys home for Thanksgiving. And instead of rushing out for Black Friday shopping (which I haven't done in years), we're heading out on a weeklong camping trip instead.

We're all going through difficult times. Please keep this in mind as you interact with others and treat them all with respect and dignity even if you have differences of opinion. We're in this together.

Safe travels and stay safe

Live Tiny. Live Free.

Lisa Adams
Editor
Cool Tears Magazine™
Lisa@cooltears.com

AND THE WINNER IS...

Thank you to everyone who participated in the first annual Cool Tears and Tiny Campers photo contest. We received so many great photos that it was very difficult to narrow down to only thirteen for the calendar. The good news is that we hope to use some of your wonderful shots in upcoming issues of the magazine as we highlight our unique community of campers.

The objective of the calendar contest was to show us photos that celebrate tiny campers in beautiful locations across the world. You definitely delivered.

We initially planned to select a top 3 places, but it was just too difficult. So we have a first, second, and two third place winners.

Please help me in congratulating the following people for their submissions:

- 1st place and our front cover: Night Sky by Colleen Olsen
- 2nd place: Death Valley National Park by Michael Camann
- 3rd place tie: Oh Sunset, You Complete Us by Cory St Cyr
Tamichi Pass by Kevin and Gwen Williams

Each of the people above will receive a free calendar as well as a \$25 credit to the Cool Tears store on Teespring where they can select their own item(s). [Cool Tears Teespring Store link](#)

The following people are also winners and will receive a free calendar:

- Kim Miller - Little Buddy & Big Trees
- Sam Van Fleet - Little Wing
- Darrell Sorensen - Florence Keller Park
- Don Simpson - Bullhead City
- Stephen Meyer - "If His Destiny Be Strange, It Is Also Sublime"
- Colin Hughes - Lake Superior
- Jeff Kubiak - Homebuilt trailer
- Barry Klassen - Classic
- Tim and Deb Foley - Bucket List, Route 66

Only a limited number of calendars will be available for purchase. It is available to pre-order now at this link [Cool Tears Calendar](#). Calendars will begin shipping on November 25, 2020.

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING! WE APPRECIATE YOU!

KITCHEN ON WHEELS

SHAKSHUKA

This month we are bringing a little international flavor to the campsite. Have you tried Shakshuka yet? Shakshuka features poached eggs in a hearty, spiced tomato and pepper sauce. I top mine with tangy feta cheese and fresh cilantro or parsley and serve with crusty bread.

The word shakshuka comes from Arabic, meaning, "a haphazard mixture" or "all mixed up" and is thought to have originated in Yemen or Tunis. These days it is a common meal any time of the day in Israel and seems to be trending in the US as a popular brunch choice. Shakshuka may sound like a fancy dish but, in reality, is quick and easy to make at home or at the campsite.

Traditionally, it is cooked in an iron pot so one would think that a dutch oven would be the perfect go-to, but I hesitate to cook acidic tomatoes in mine, preferring to use a regular stainless steel pot on the stovetop or on campfire coals.

Shortcut- make the tomato and vegetable mixture at home and store in the fridge or freezer. When ready, heat until simmering (you may need to thin with a little water), add eggs and follow the recipe as directed.

Shakshuka

Oil - Olive or Avocado

1 c. yellow onion, chopped

1 pepper, chopped- green, red, yellow - whatever you like

1 cup spinach or kale, chopped (optional)

2-3 garlic cloves, peeled, chopped

1 tsp ground coriander

1 tsp paprika, smoked or regular

1/2 tsp ground cumin

1/4 tsp chili powder

Pinch red pepper flakes or cayenne (optional)

Salt and pepper to taste

1 (28oz) can crushed tomatoes

3-6 eggs

Optional: chopped fresh parsley, mint or cilantro, feta, avocado - sprinkle on top

Directions


Heat 3 tbsp olive oil in a large cast iron skillet. Add the onions, peppers, garlic, spices, pinch salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables have softened, 5-7 minutes. Add the tomatoes and break up large chunks with your spatula. Add



greens, if using. Cover and let simmer for about 15 minutes. Uncover and cook a bit longer to allow the mixture to reduce and thicken. Taste and adjust the seasoning to your liking. (This is the part that could be made ahead of time at home.)


Using a wooden spoon, make indentations, or "wells," in the tomato mixture, spacing so that the eggs will poach evenly. Gently crack an egg into each indentation.

Reduce the heat, cover the skillet, and cook on low until the egg whites are set. Uncover and add optional toppings (my favorite is feta cheese). You can add more black pepper or crushed red pepper, if you like. Serve as is or with warm pita or crusty bread.




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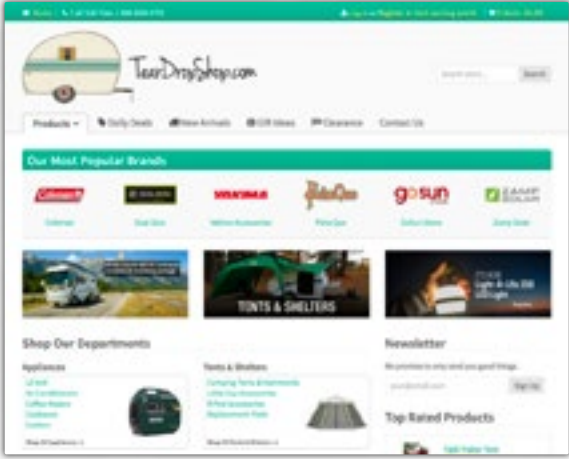
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WINTERIZING 101

By Lisa Adams

It's that time of year for most people in North America. Time to stop camping, winterize our tiny campers and start dreaming about the upcoming trips that we'll be taking. One of the nice features about teardrops and other tiny campers is their simplicity. For many, winterizing simply means putting the teardrop in a garage or barn and that's it. It doesn't get any easier than that. However, some of you have teardrops with more systems which require maintenance, mainly water, plumbing and electric.

While this article won't be able to specifically speak to every manufacturer's nuances, it will walk you through the basics of how to winterize your tiny camper. This article and graphic will focus on water systems and general winterization tips. In the next issue, Cool Tears will cover what you can do with your electrical systems over the off-season.

While it could be tempting to simply put your teardrop or square drop under a cover and forget it until spring, it could lead to issues when you uncover it for your first trip of the new season.

Here is a general winterizing checklist of non electrical/plumbing systems:

1. Clean your tiny camper inside and out
2. Remove all food items (including any canned goods you may keep in your galley)
3. If you have a refrigerator or cooler that you keep in your tiny camper, prop the door/lid open for air flow
4. If you have a propane tank that is plumbed to your galley, be sure to turn off the propane
5. Cover any outside outlets or openings, we use painter's tape
6. Check for leaks around your doors and windows and reseal if needed
7. Clean your awning if you have one, thoroughly dry and store
8. Cover your tiny camper, if able

Here are the general steps to winterize your water system:

- Empty black, gray, and fresh water tanks
- Turn on your fresh water pump and open up all of your faucets (hot and cold if you have both). This will drain your fresh water tank. Turn off faucets once there is no more flow
- If you have a water heater, disconnect from the electric (if it's connected) and then remove the plug to drain the water heater tank. Replace the plug once drained.* (see note below for NuCamp T@Bs)
- NEVER DRAIN THE WATER HEATER WHEN IT'S HOT OR UNDER PRESSURE
- Once that is done, you are ready for the antifreeze
- Pour about a gallon or two of RV antifreeze into your freshwater tank.
- Turn on all of your faucet(s) until antifreeze starts flowing out. Then turn off.
- Turn off the water pump
- Pour about a ½ cup of antifreeze into the drain of each sink.
- Flush the toilet until you see antifreeze
- Drain the antifreeze from the black and grey tanks
- Wash and store your sewer hose
- Congratulations! You're done!

*Note: On some of the larger NuCamp T@B campers of similar campers, there may also be a drain valve in your water system. Once your faucets are opened, you can blow air in the system to push out the water. This is usually no more than 25 - 30 psi of pressure. Next, position your valves into

HOW TO WINTERIZE

YOUR TINY CAMPER



clean your tiny camper



disconnect your propane



check for leaks



empty cooler/fridge

GENERAL WINTERIZING CHECKLIST

1. Clean your tiny camper inside and out
2. Remove all food items (including any canned goods you may keep in your galley)
3. If you have a refrigerator or cooler that you keep in your tiny camper, prop the door/lid open for air flow
4. If you have a propane tank that is plumbed to your galley, be sure to turn off the propane
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7. Clean your awning if you have one, thoroughly dry and store
8. Cover your tiny camper, if you are able

the "Winterization Mode" to bypass your Alde water heater.

Cool Tears is aiming to be your one stop shop for teardrops and other tiny campers. We are planning to publish on our website the manufacturer specific winterizing and maintenance details. This will take time to build up our knowledge base and to get it posted to our website. So check back often to see if your manufacturer is covered.



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A ROLLING BOX OF MEMORIES

By **Bob Phillips**

Justin Sedekum’s home-built teardrop is a rolling box of family memories. In the build, he used household items left from his paternal grandparents when they passed; made use of his mother’s old keepsake cedar chest; and incorporated bits and pieces from his parents’ old house. Even the trailer frame is from a heavy steel utility trailer that his grandfather built in the late 80s when Justin was in high school. It was that trailer that finally inspired him to build this tribute camper.



“I was very close to my dad’s parents, who were simple and down to earth people,” he said. “My grandpa had built a nice drop axle utility trailer with steel sides. He gave it to me in the late 90s and I used it many times over the years. I lost grandpa in 2006 and then grandma in 2015. It

was after she was gone and I was looking at grandpa’s rusty trailer sitting in my drive that I decided to do something with it.”

“I didn’t have much of theirs; they just didn’t have much. And what I did have wasn’t useful to anyone and only meant something to me. I decided to build a teardrop out of his trailer and incorporate as much as I could from what I had of theirs, along with some things from other family members. I decided to turn it into a tribute teardrop for my daughters to inherit someday.” Before he started, Justin scoured the internet to see what others had built. He had a general idea of what he wanted, including plenty of storage, both 12v and 120v circuits, an air conditioner and a sink, and he wanted it to look rustic. He settled on a profile called a Wyoming Woody and even found the profile online that he scaled to fit his needs

Justin took his time on the project, working in spare time here and there. He didn’t go in with a master plan but sort of designed it as he built it. He started the project in the spring of 2016 and only recently finished the camper. Getting the old trailer restored and repurposed for a teardrop proved to be time consuming. Getting it lengthened on the back end, de-scaled, primed and painted took a considerable amount of time.

"The trailer had a wood floor and steel sides," Justin explained. "It was built very heavy."

"Grandpa was a welder for a company that built radio towers so he knew how to lay a heavy weld. I needed to deconstruct his old trailer down to the frame and axle. This just took more time than anything. I realized I needed to move the axle rearward after I started building the teardrop. I had my dad's help in fabricating some heavy leaf spring brackets that I could bolt on and slide the axle back until I got the proper tongue weight and then welded the brackets to the frame. I decided to wait until it was mostly completed before doing that. I built the galley first and had to add weight to the front to keep the tongue down. Then I built the tongue box and installed the air conditioning unit on it. That kept the tongue down but was still too light to tow."



"After the frame was ready I started with building a storage compartment in the floor. I had seen others build this into their design and thought it was a good idea. The floor is insulated with two layers of heavy black plastic with foam board sandwiched in between. The walls are larger than a 4 x 8 sheet so I used a biscuit joiner and TB3 to extend it to accommodate my profile."

Justin found four camper windows from an RV junkyard near dad's home in Indiana, two each of different sizes. He said they appeared to be new. He installed two in the doors and decided not to use the other two in the side walls, opting instead for a 16-inch-diameter round window that he ran across.

"The doors were difficult," he said. "I bought a circle jig for my router to help. I had issues with warping so I kept my doors in the house after I remade them a second time. Once they were sealed from moisture they seemed more stable."

"Inside walls are covered in red cedar closet liner except for the front cedar wall. Cabinet frames are made from western cedar and parts from an old dresser. The floor under the galley is made of galvanized steel used for making ductwork. I formed it up 2" on the sides and back then sealed it with RTV to create a waterproof tray in case something leaked. The bowl for the sink was also grandpa's. It was used to clean car parts back to at least the 60s. The tongue and groove walls of the kitchen are recycled from my dad's old house in Indiana. The handle on the sink faucet is from the original water main from my house."

"The tongue box on the front is made from a single 4' x 10' sheet of rusty sheet steel I found half buried in my backyard when I

moved into my house years ago. I had also built a small solar generator before I decided to build the teardrop and wanted to incorporate it into the build so the dimensions of the tongue box were built not just for the AC, but also to accommodate the generator. The front removable panels on the tongue box are made from old street signs."



Another challenge, he said, was finding ways to incorporate some of the memorable items left by his grandparents and materials that had value to him alone. For example, the red and green cabinet doors and drawer fronts are from his grandfather's old dresser and the front wall came from his mother's cedar hope chest that had sustained water damage.

“This dresser only had three drawers and was originally green but had been repainted decades ago a dark red on all but one side. All of it was built with square nails and none of the wood was the same thickness and was thin by today’s standards. The two green doors on the upper cabinet in the sleeping area are from that one side that never got repainted. To make the doors and drawer fronts, I took pieces from the drawer boxes and ran them through a thickness planer to make them all dimensionally the same, then laminated them to the backside of the drawer fronts. I used Titebond 3 and a lot of wood clamps being careful not to damage the old oil-based paint. I left all the imperfections including the knob holes. All the galley cabinets were built around the maximum size I could cut the doors to. The upper galley cabinet frames were built from the internal wood of the dresser. When you open the doors you can still see where the drawers wore the wood away.”



Justin used a technique called ‘Poor Man’s Fiberglass’ to do the roof. Cool Tears will have an article on ‘Poor Man’s Fiberglass’ in the March/April 2021 issue. The sides, tongue box and hatch are covered in old redwood siding that was planed down. The tail lights are from a 64 Chevrolet Impala. Cedar accents were used for the fender steps as well as a sunburst design on the tongue box lid.

Justin recently took his camper to his dad’s in Indiana for its maiden voyage, a 3 hour drive each way, with no issues. The first real trip, he said, will probably be to Turkey Run State Park in Indiana or Starved Rock in his home state of Illinois. Eventually, he hopes to take it to the West Coast.





By LISA ADAMS

With the holidays quickly approaching, we thought it would be fun to put together a list of personalized gifts and stocking stuffers for your teardrop and tiny camper family and friends. Just click on the blue underlined text and you'll go right where you can order these for the tiny camper enthusiast in your life.

[Teardrop or Squaredrop Cork Coasters, set of 4 by www.TearDropShop.com](http://www.TearDropShop.com)

The TearDropShop is an advertiser in CoolTears Magazine and they have many wonderful gift ideas geared towards the tiny camper in your life. They carry standard teardrop shaped items, as well as some specific shapes, including Little Guy Max, MyPod, T@B, and T@G brand campers. Please check out their website and find something that is perfect for you. They have decals, mugs, dish towels, birdhouses, garden flags, key chains, magnets, and much more. One of our favorite items is the Cork Coaster set. These extra thick round cork coasters are available in 17 different teardrop or squaredrop shapes so you can easily match it to your own tiny camper.



[Pan Scrapers by Norpro](#)

Looking for a stocking stuffer? These little pan scrapers are easy to hold, even when wet and they come in several different bright colors. These are dishwasher safe and are great for clearing your cutting board and your stainless, non-stick, cast iron, or glass pans. You can get packs of 1, 3, or 6. One scraper is currently \$4.99 on Amazon.com, 3 are only \$6.99, and 6 are \$11.99.

[Drinkware by Yeti](#)

Several years ago, my father-in-law bought the entire family their own 20 oz Yeti Rambler Tumbler with the mag slider lid for Christmas gifts. The next morning, the boys came downstairs and kept telling us that their new cups still had ice from the day before. Yes, all Yeti drinkware is that good. Your hot beverages will stay hot and your cold will stay cold. They work so well, that when I make my tea or coffee at home, I don't heat the water to boiling - if I did, it would be 4+ hours before I would be able to drink it. They are made from stainless steel and feature a double wall vacuum insulation, so they don't sweat. Because of the construction, they are perfect for tiny camper adventures in the backcountry or long days on the water.

If your budget allows, the Tundra hard coolers work great. We use the 35 Tundra as the freezer on our camping trips. It fits perfectly in our galley and anything we put in this cooler that is frozen will stay frozen for days, if packed well. These are bear-proof too, if you are camping in bear country and want to leave your cooler outside. You can use dry ice in these coolers if you want to keep items frozen for several days with no ice turning to water.



[Click here for Free Ground Shipping from Yeti.](#) Also, check out the September/October 2020 issue for bear safety tips.

[*Drinkware by Hydro Flask*](#)

Similar to the drinkware by Yeti, we like the Hydro Flask products because they offer more sizes, styles, and colors of drinkware. They have products specifically for coffee, beer, wine, food, etc. Like the Yeti, they are made of double wall vacuum insulated stainless steel and they are backed by a lifetime warranty. They will keep the water icy cold on a hot sunny beach. Serve up a hot coffee or hot chocolate for that chairlift ride to the top of the mountain. Your tea or coffee will be hot on those chilly fall or spring mornings as you step out of your tiny camper into nature. We're going to have some of the insulated food jars under the tree this year. Shhhhhh...don't tell! It will be nice to go on a late morning hike with these in our packs so we can enjoy a hot lunch on the trail without taking along a tiny backpacker stove. [Free Upgraded Shipping on Everything! Click this link and use offer code FASTSHIP20 in cart. Coupon Code: FASTSHIP20](#) This free shipping code expires December 30, 2020.



MyMedic

My dad was a fireman for 32 years. I remember having fire drills at home so we knew how to get out of the house safely. We also were taught basic first aid skills at a young age which I furthered when I became a lifeguard in my teens. Knowing what to do in an emergency is key, especially if you prefer to use your tiny camper in the backcountry. MyMedic has several different first-aid kits and then additional packs to add to your first aid kit. One that stands out for us is the Pet Medic kit which has everything you need to remedy the most common injuries to your pet, no matter how large or small. [If you order by November 30, 2020 you can get 30% off SITEWIDE. Just click this link.](#)

[*Coleman Camping Table - Roll Top Aluminum Table*](#)



This table packs up small, which is perfect for tiny campers. The top of the table is just over 27 inches square and is 30 inches tall, making it perfect for having dinner or playing cards at the campsite. This ultra portable table also will work as a hydration station at your kids' ball games or can be used to hold your camp stove. You can seat four people around this table for dinner, drinks, or games but do notice that due to the cross bar construction, you cannot put your legs under the table.

[*Teardrop/Squaredrop t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs and more - by Cool Tears*](#)

Cool Tears has opened up a storefront on Teespring.com. There are items here to fit every budget and need on your shopping list. There are long and short sleeved t-shirts (for men, women, kids, and infants), sweatshirts, tote bags, mugs, dog hoodies, fleece blankets, pillows, and stickers. Here are a few designs available now: our own "Live Tiny - Live Free" logo, "Teardrop-pin' - Home is where you hitch it" design, and our "#Socialdistancing" design, which features teardrops, squaredrops, and other tiny camper designs. Please note that these are printed on demand, so be sure to give yourself enough time to get that gift before Christmas. Check back frequently as more camper designs and more designs will continue to be added.

We prove that you don't need a big RV to get out and explore. Live Tiny - Live Free.



[2021 Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Calendar](#)

Do you want to show off your love of teardrops and other tiny campers? Then this 11" x 8.5" high gloss, wall calendar is for you. The limited run calendar is filled with 14 fantastic photos submitted by our readers as part of the first annual CoolTears photo contest. Only 150 calendars will be available this year, so place your orders as early as possible to ensure you don't miss out. If these sell out in November, we will place another smaller order with our printer for December delivery, but we can't guarantee that it will arrive to you by Christmas. [Click here to order your calendar.](#) The calendars will begin shipping on November 25th, 2020. Place your order now so you don't miss out!



*Note: Some of the links above are affiliate links. Cool Tears may make a small commission on the purchases above without adding any cost to you.



Dog Safety While Camping



What's better than teardrop camping with a dog? Camping with three dogs! All kidding aside, camping with your dog is like having your best friend along for your adventures, but it does take some preparation to make sure that your dogs are safe and comfortable while away from home. This article will focus on the things to consider before taking your dog or dogs camping with you.

First, make sure that your pet is microchipped and has all of their tags on their collars. It is entirely possible that they could get loose or run-off, so it is important to have some form of identification on your dog. If your dog is microchipped, then make sure that your contact information is registered and up to date. Our dogs have their names and our phone numbers embroidered on their collars, [similar to these found on Amazon](#). We use ID tags too, but find that they eventually wear through or fall off, so the collars are extra insurance that we would be contacted in the event a pup went missing.

Second, all dogs need a solid parasite prevention program. Heartworm is spread by mosquito bites and is found in all 50 US states, southern Canada provinces, and is prevalent in South America, Japan and Italy. The bite of just one mosquito with the heartworm larvae can infect your dog. Fleas, ticks and other parasitic worms are unpleasant concerns, easily addressed with the correct vet recommended treatment. We use a broad spectrum parasite

control which addresses not only heartworm and fleas but whip, round, hook and tapeworm as our dogs get into some questionable things on our farm where "brown skittles" abound.

Third, it's best if your dog knows some basic commands. Work on a few fundamental behaviors, such as stay, come, drop it, quiet, and leave it. One of our three dogs will "leave it" when it comes to any food we might drop in the house or while camping, but apparently that doesn't work for him with the "brown Skittles" mentioned above. He thinks they are delicious - which we find disgusting. Your dog should not be allowed to roam off leash while camping and most campgrounds require you to keep them on a certain length of leash at all times. We normally see six foot leash lengths as the requirement. This is for their safety and for the safety of those around them. Our dogs are terriers, so it seems that we do work on the "quiet" command frequently, but as they have become more acclimated to camping, the need to practice "quiet" has gone down.

Fourth, acclimate your dog to being outside more. This is new for your dog, so they may not eat, drink, or sleep as well when they are not in their own environment. Keep that in mind if you like to take them on long hikes. They may become overheated or dehydrated more quickly. As many of us in North America prepare for winter, it's important to also think about if your dog can handle the colder temperatures. You may need to put a coat on them or cover them up at night in the teardrop so they don't become too chilled. We have a thirteen year old Miniature Pinscher who gets cold easily. So we keep a warm coat on her and we keep an eye on her to see how she's doing with the cold. Our dogs don't tolerate booties, but if yours do, it may be necessary in the winter.



Lastly, to close out the things to keep your dog safe while camping, either create a dog specific first aid kit or add some dog-specific supplies to your own. Here are some of the things that you'll want to include: digital thermometer (use a permanent marker to note normal body temperature on the pet thermometer, 101-102.5 Fahrenheit, 38.3-39.2 Celsius) saline solution for wound or eye rinsing, tick removal tool, blood clotting powder, cotton swabs, a pet first aid guide and phone number for emergency vet (don't rely on your smart phone in case you don't have coverage), an antiseptic, heavy-duty stretchy bandages ([we use vet wrap - it sticks to itself, not your pet](#)), gauze, antihistamines, tweezers, activated charcoal for absorbing toxins, 3% hydrogen peroxide to induce vomiting in case of accidental poisoning, and antibiotic ointment. When injured or in pain, a dog may bite so adding a muzzle or making sure you have gauze or wrapping that could be used as a muzzle is something to consider. Before your trip, you can mark the box of antihistamine with the dosage that your pet needs, so you won't need to look it up in an emergency, like if they find a hornets nest. Keep in mind that the diphenhydramine should not contain xylitol, which is toxic for dogs.

Watch for future issues featuring Camping with Dogs with more tips, tricks and a few tales too.

[Social distancing items available on the Cool Tears Teespring Store](#)



The Conception of a Dragon

By **MELODY MILLER**

In 2014, John and Melody began building the teardrop they had planned for at least eight to nine years. In April 2015 they took it on the first camping trip. Every month since then they have camped in Maison Petit, their custom 10'9" x 5' traditional teardrop. They only missed one month, when John had bypass surgery. Although Melody did make a day trip they had planned for that weekend to visit camping friends.

Maison Petit has well over 30,000 miles of travel. The couple adds map stickers when they spend at least one night in the state in their teardrop. Currently, they have stickers for twenty-one states, mostly in the south and central United States, ranging from California to North Carolina.

For about eight months straight, every time they went on a camping trip, it rained. John decided that he wanted to build a bigger teardrop just for the inclement weather trips. Planning for their Dragon Lair began. It is 14' long x 6.5' high x 7' wide. Because it is bigger than a standard teardrop, "dragon tear" is what started the idea of the dragon theme. They discussed many names, including Marais Dragone (Swamp Dragon) which went along Melody's Cajun heritage, which is how Maison Petit, their first teardrop, was named.

In August 2019, construction of the trailer began. At the end of August, one of their nine children got married and financially it temporarily delayed further construction.



Eight months later, the building resumed. They spent most of April building the floor and then using a template to figure out door and window placement. By the beginning of May, the walls were up. Originally, they had planned to build it stick framed, but they later decided that solid plywood walls would be best. Bit by bit, mostly working in the evenings a couple hours, it slowly began to take shape. By the end of May, John decided he would like to have a dragon drawn up for a wrap. Melody started drawing it up on graph paper. Once the basic outline was done with a few details like the head and tail, they took it to a local vinyl graphics company to see if it would be possible to put a custom vinyl wrap on their larger "dragon tear."



After talking to the graphics company, Melody began creating the design on her iPad.

John and Melody made great progress as construction continued. They were able to install the outside skin in July and a few months later, installed the aluminum skin.

Though the dragon tear is not complete, they were able to attend a rally in Texas at the

beginning of October 2020. So the dragon, now called "Lagniappe," (lan-yap) by Melody, made her maiden voyage. (Lagniappe is defined as "something given as a bonus or extra gift" by the Oxford dictionary).

In a future issue, Melody and John will share their completed Lagniappe with us. Good luck to them as they continue their work in the coming months on their large, homebuilt teardrop. I'm told that there will be many unique features to look out for!





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